

REMARKS

The specification of the subject U.S. patent application, as filed, as constituted by the verified translation of PCT/DE2003/003941 has been cancelled in favor of the concurrently submitted Substitute Specification. A suitable Abstract of the Disclosure has been added. These changes and additions do not constitute any new matter.

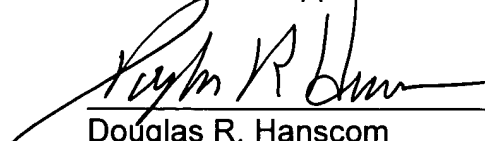
Original claims 1-60, Article 19 claims 1-61 and replacement claims 1-69 have all been cancelled. New claims 70-133 have been added. These new claims 70-133 are essentially the same in scope, as the claims which are currently pending in the PCT application. They have been rewritten more in a form in accordance with U.S. practice and eliminating multiple dependencies.

Entry of the Preliminary Amendment into the file of the subject U.S. patent application, prior to an examination of the application on the merits, and prior to the calculation of the filing fee is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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June 14, 2005
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Attorney Docket: W1.2247 PCT-US

10/538854

[WO 2004/054807]

[PCT/DE2003/003941]

JC17 Rec'd PCT/PTO 14 JUN 2005

MARKED-UP COPY OF SPECIFICATION

KÜMMET: W1.2247 PCT-US

[Specification]

**PRINTING BLANKET ASSEMBLY FOR A BLANKET CYLINDER AND
METHODS FOR PRODUCING A PRINTING BLANKET ASSEMBLY[THE SAME]**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[001] This application is the U.S. national phase, under 35 USC 371, of
PCT/DE2003/003941, filed November 27, 2003; published as WO 2004/054807
A1 on July 1, 2004; and claiming priority to DE 102 58 975.5, filed December 16,
2002; to DE 103 07 382.5, filed February 21 2003; to DE 103 07 383.3, filed
February 21, 2003; to DE 103 29 270.5, filed June 30, 2003; and to DE 103 54
436.4, filed November 21, 2003, the disclosures of which are expressly
incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[002] The present invention is directed[relates] to printing blanket units or
assemblies of a printing blanket cylinder of a printing press, as well as to methods
for producing such a printing blanket assembly[it in accordance with the

preambles of claims 1, 2, 25, 40, 44 or 45]. The assemblies include a support plate and a printing blanket. A filler material is arranged on at least one end of the printing blanket.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[003] Printing blanket assemblies or units are fastened on a[the] printing blanket cylinder of a printing press[es] and are used in offset printing for transferring the print image from the forme cylinder to the web of material to be imprinted. To provide[For providing] the required mechanical strength for the printing blanket unit, a support plate which is made[platemade], for example, of sheet steel or sheet aluminum, is employed. A printing blanket, which can be configured[designed] in the manner of a rubber blanket, for example, is fastened on the outside of the support plate. Folded or angled plate end legs, which are free of the printing blanket, are provided at the leading end and/or the trailing end of the support plate. These legs are used for fixing the printing blanket unit in place on the printing blanket cylinder. These legs can [then]be inserted, for

example, into a slit which is provided in the printing blanket cylinder and can be fixed in place in the slit to secure the blanket assembly to the blanket cylinder[there].

[004] A problem in connection with known printing blanket units is that the printing blanket does not cover[enclose] the support plate seamlessly. A[, and that instead a] gap frequently remains between the leading and the trailing ends of the printing blanket and the support plate. No printing ink can be transferred₁ in the area of the gap₁ to the web of material to be imprinted. Furthermore, the print image is of reduced quality at the edges of the printing blanket in the direction toward the gap. Therefore₁ several solutions are known in the prior art, by the use[means] of which solutions the disadvantages caused by the provision of a gap between the ends of the printing blanket have attempted to[can] be avoided.

[005] A printing blanket unit is known from DE 195 47 917 A1. The[, wherein the] two ends of the printing blanket overlap each other with a positive connection in order to reduce the gap that typically is located between the ends of the printing blanket.

[WO 2004/054807]

[PCT/DE2003/003941]

[006] A printing blanket unit is known from DE 195 21 645 A1. A[, wherein a] slide is arranged between the two legs of the support plate. In this prior art arrangement[,case] the outward pointing end of the slide is connected with a filler element. The[, so that the] gap between the ends of the printing blanket is closed by the filler element.

[007] A printing blanket unit is known from DE 195 43 584 C1. In this device[, wherein] the printing blanket is put together from a plurality of layers. A[Here, the] top layer of the plurality of layers covers the front areas of the layers underneath it and in this way forms a protrusion, by the use[means] of which protrusion the gap at the ends is reduced.

[008] USP 5,749,298 discloses a printing blanket unit with a support plate, whose ends are folded. The printing blanket, which is arranged on the support plate, is sealed at the front.

[009] USP 4,635,550 discloses a printing blanket unit with a printing blanket arranged on a support plate. A support element is arranged in the groove in the support plate, which support element supports the projecting end of the printing

blanket.

[010] USP 2,525,003 shows a device for producing a printing blanket unit.

[011] USP 4,643,093 discloses a printing plate with a reinforced end and an associated device.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[012] The object of the present invention is directed to[based on producing] printing blanket units of a printing blanket cylinder of a printing press, as well as to methods for producing such printing blanket units[it].

[013] In accordance with the present invention, this object is attained by the provision of a printing blanket unit for use on a printing blanket cylinder of a rotary printing press. The printing blanket unit has a dimensionally stable support plate and a printing blanket which is fastened on an exterior surface of the support plate. A filler material is arranged on at least one end of the printing blanket and extends at least as far as an exterior surface of the printing blanket. This filler material, which is embodied as a support element, extends in a longitudinal

direction of the printing blanket on the outside of the printing blanket facing away from the support plate. The support plate typically has two folded legs with the filler material being on folds that form the folded legs[means of the characteristics of claims 1, 2, 25, 40, 44 or 45].

[014] An advantage of the printing blanket unit or assembly in accordance with the present invention lies, in particular, in that by the use[means] of this printing blanket unit or assembly, in which a filler material is arranged in the area of a virtual extension of the exterior of the printing blanket in the longitudinal direction of the printing blanket, a[the] gap between the ends of the printing blanket is minimized. In this connection, it is easily within the scope of the present invention[conceivable] for the protrusion of the filler material to be selected to be so large that, in its[the] installed position, the two ends of the printing blanket come to rest against each other.

[015] The filler materials, which are also called support elements, are used for supporting a counter-cylinder, and in particular for supporting a forme cylinder or a plate cylinder, in the radial direction.

[016] A multitude of fastening solutions are possible[is conceivable] for use in fastening the filler material on the printing blanket unit. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the filler material is fastened on the support plate in the area of the plate fold and/or on the inside of the printing blanket by a material-to-material contact, such as, in particular by being glued on or by being applied by vulcanization.

[017] The filler material can be produced in a particularly simple manner[simply] if it is made using[of] the same material as is used for the printing blanket, such as, for example₁ of rubber or a similar material, or of the same material as the support plate, such as, for example₁ of metal. It is then conceivable₁ in particular₁ to form the filler material as one piece together with[on] the printing blanket or with the support plate.

[018] Printing blanket materials, which have only a minimal gap, can be produced in a relatively uncomplicated[simple] way by using the production method in accordance with the present invention.

[019] The execution of the method in accordance with the present invention

takes place in a device located outside of the printing press, in which device, at least the support plate, with the already applied printing blanket attached, is arranged. The flowable filler material is introduced into a mold of the device, where it is applied to the ends of the support plate, at least one leg of which support plate has already been folded.

[020] The filler material is placed in the areas around the folds of the legs and is shaped by [the]slides which are attached to the device which is located separate from the printing press. Thereafter, the filler material is processed in accordance with the required measurements.

[021] In an alternative method in accordance with the present invention, filler material is applied to the support plate, which support plate has at least one folded end and on which support plate the printing blanket has already applied, in the area of the fold of the support plate. This filler material[and] is connected with a front face of the end.

[022] In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, the printing blanket unit or assembly has at least one end of a greater thickness than in

an[the] area of the unit or assembly located between the two ends, so that the outer surface of the printing blanket unit in the area of this end₁ protrudes₁ in the radial direction of the cylinder at least partially past the virtual extension of the exterior of the printing blanket.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[023] Preferred embodiments[Embodiments] of the present invention are represented in the drawings and will be described in what follows.

[024] Shown are in:

Fig. 1, a first preferred embodiment of a printing blanket unit, in accordance with the present invention, in a first production phase, in

Fig. 2, the printing blanket unit shown in [accordance with]Fig. 1, in a second production phase, in

Fig. 3, the printing blanket unit shown in [accordance with]Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 and in a third production phase, in

Fig. 4, a second preferred embodiment of a printing blanket unit in

accordance with the present invention, in

Fig. 5, a third preferred embodiment of a printing blanket unit in a partial cross sectional view, in

Figs. 6 and 7, first and second[exemplary] embodiments of a production method for producing a printing blanket unit in accordance with the present invention, in

Fig. 8, a preferred[an exemplary] embodiment of the printing blanket unit made in accordance with the production method of Fig. 7 and with thickened ends, in

Figs. 9 to 11, preferred[exemplary] embodiments of [a]further production methods for a printing blanket unit, and in

Fig. 12, a preferred[an exemplary] embodiment of the printing blanket unit in accordance with Fig. 3 with thickened ends.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[025] A[The] printing blanket unit in accordance with the present invention and as

represented at 01, 17, or 41 in Fig. 1 to Fig. 12, and whose thickness d01, as seen in Fig. 4 is, for example, 1.6 mm, consists of a dimensionally stable support plate 02, 18[,] or 42, respectively, of a thickness d02, as seen in Fig. 4, of approximately 0.2 mm to 0.5 mm, and of a printing blanket 03, 19[,] or 43, respectively, fastened on the support plate 02, 18, 42. The support plate 02, 18[,] or 42 is made of metal, such as, for example, sheet steel or sheet aluminum. The printing blanket 03, 19[,] or 43 can be embodied, for example, in the manner of a rubber blanket 03, 19, 43 respectively, and in particular can be fabricated[from] several layers of different materials.

[026] The leading and trailing printing blanket unit securement legs 04[,] and 06, 21[,] and 22, or 44[,] and 46 respectively, which are free of and are not overlaid by the printing blanket, are folded downward at the leading and at the trailing end of the support plate 02, 18, 42 by the use of[in] a folding machine which is not shown, so that the now angled or folded legs 04, 06, 21, 22, 44, 46 can later be used for fastening the printing blanket unit on a printing blanket cylinder 05, as shown in Fig. 4[09]. The folded leg 06, 21, 46 at the leading end, together with

the support plate 02, 18, 42 following it, forms an acute opening angle α_{06} , in particular of 30 to 60 degrees, and preferably of 40 to 50 degrees. The folded leg 04, 22, 44 which is situated at the plate trailing end, together with the center element 07, 35, 47 of the adjoining support plate 02, 18, 42, respectively, following it, has an opening angle α_{04} of 45 to 150 degrees, and in particular of 80 to 100 degrees. In a preferred [exemplary] embodiment of the present invention, the angle size α_{04} is 120 to 150 degrees. The center element 07, 35, 47 of the support plate 02, 18, 42 respectively, which is completely covered by the printing blanket 03, 19, 43, respectively and which is facing toward the outside, extends between the legs 04 and[,] 06, 21 and[,] 22, or 44 and[,] 46, respectively. Fold lines or fold zones[The folds] 08 and[,] 09, 27 and[,] 28, or 48 and[,] 49 are located at, and extend at the transition between the center element 07, 35, 47 on the one side and the legs 04, 22, 44, or 06, 21, 46 on the other side.

[027] In the printing blanket unit production phase, which is represented in Fig. 1, the support plate 06, as well as the printing blanket 03, are both configured as being[designed] approximately flat, so that the printing blanket 03 can be fastened

[WO 2004/054807]

[PCT/DE2003/003941]

on the support plate 02 free of tension and deformation. To this end, the printing blanket 03 can be glued [on]and/or can be vulcanized to the support plate 02 using any suitable process[on].

[028] The[Thereafter the] legs 04 and 06, which are free of the printing blanket 03, are folded downward in a folding machine, in a procedure which is not specifically depicted, and the result is shown in [(Fig. 2)].

[029] The folds 08 and 09 or fold lines or fold zones are produced in the folding machine in such a way that the result is that each of the two ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03 protrude some distance past their respective one of the folds 08 and 09. A resultant[The] space between the protruding ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03 on the one hand, and the support plate 02 on the other, is filled with[by] a suitable filler material 13, 14, which filler material 13, 14 is also called a support element 13 and 14. The filler material 13 and 14 can be provided, for example,[produced] by applying a curable rubber material, for example.

[030] The filler material 13, 14 is preferably deformable and/or flowable while it is[when] being applied.

[031] A portion of the resultant printing blanket[fabric] unit 01 is shown, in its[the] installed position, in Fig. 3. It can be seen in Fig. 3 that in the installed position, the two support plate legs 04 and 06 extend at complementary angles to[opposite] and parallel to each other, so that they can be fastened together in a slit in a printing cylinder, which is not specifically represented. Because of the protrusion of the ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03, A[, the] width of the resultant gap 16 between the ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03 is minimized. It[Because of this it] is possible, for example, to minimize the width of the gap 16 to a width of less than 0.5 mm.

[032] The distance between the folds or fold lines or fold zones 08, 09 substantially corresponds to the distance a01 of the opening in the cylinder surface and is less than 3 mm. In[, in] particular, the opening a01[it] is less than 2.0 mm.

[033] Because of the support of the protruding ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03 by the filler material 13 and 14, a suitable[sufficient] print transfer from the printing blanket 03 to a web of material to be imprinted is achieved in this area

defined by the blanket protruding ends 11 and 12.

[034] As represented in Fig. 4, a[the] distance a02 between the oppositely located ends 11, 12 of the printing blanket 03 is 0.2 mm to 0.8 mm, and preferably is 0.3 mm to 0.7 mm. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the distance a02 is 0.4 mm to 0.6 mm, and in particular is 0.5 mm.

[035] The fold 08 of the trailing end leg 04 has a radius R of 0.6 mm to 1.2 mm, and in particular of 0.8 mm, as shown in Fig. 4.

[036] The[But the] fold 09 of the leading end leg 06 has a radius R of 0.3 mm to 0.7 mm, and in particular of 0.5 mm, also as shown in Fig. 4.

[037] A[The] length L13, L14 of each[the] respective support element 13, 14 in the circumferential direction is 0.4 mm to 1.0 mm, and in particular is from 0.1 mm to 1.3 mm. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a[the] length L13, L14 of each of the support elements 13, 14 is 0.7 mm.

[038] As represented in Fig. 4, the filler material 13, 14 can be formed in different shapes. For example, the filler material 13 has an acute angle, while the filler material 14 is shaped generally right-angled.

[039] The measurements described for Fig. 4 can be substantially transferred to all of the embodiments of the present invention, which are represented in all of the drawing figures.

[040] A third embodiment of a printing blanket unit, in accordance with the present invention, is represented in Fig. 5. This printing blanket unit also has a support plate 18 of sheet steel and a printing blanket 19 of rubber. To produce[For producing] the printing blanket unit, first the support plate 18 is fastened, by utilization[means] of its legs 21 and 22, on a processing cylinder, whose shape corresponds to the shape of the printing blanket cylinder in the printing press on which the printing blanket unit is ultimately to be fastened[in the printing press]. Following this placement, a sealing element 23 is inserted into the gap 26 between the legs 21 and 22 and is used for closing[sealing] the gap 26 at the bottom of the gap 26. Thereafter, a liquid elastomer material is applied to the outside of the support plate 18 in such a way that the support plate 18 is enclosed in a continuous sub-structure layer 24 of this liquid elastomer. In the area of the oppositely located legs 21 and 22 of the support plate, the sub-

structure layer 24 fills the gap 26 which is the space between the oppositely located folds or fold lines or fold zones 27 and 28.

[041] Subsequently, a suitable[the] printing blanket 19 is fastened on the sub-structure layer 24, by being, for example, applied by vulcanization. The gap 26, which continues between the ends 31 and 32 of the printing blanket 19, is closed by filler material, here also called sealing material 29[19], which, for example, may be a curable elastomeric material, and which is thereafter ground at the outside for producing a uniform cylindrical outer surface.

[042] At the end of the process, the sealing material 29[19] and the sub-structure layer 24 are cut through along a[the] cutting line 33, as seen in Fig. 5, so that the printing blanket unit can be removed from the processing cylinder and can subsequently be mounted on a printing blanket cylinder. Separate support elements 34 and 36 are formed by [means of]the separation of the sub-structure layer 24, which separate support elements 34 and 36[respectively] support the respective ends 31 and 32 of the printing blanket 19 from below. In the course of mounting the printing blanket unit on a printing blanket cylinder, the lateral faces

of the support elements 34 and 36, which lateral faces were formed[created] by the cut along the cutting line 33, can come into a positively connected contact with each other.

[043] Figs. 6 to 8 show preferred[exemplary] embodiments of a different production method for the production of a printing blanket unit similar in structure to the one depicted in Fig. 3.

[044] As previously[already] described, at least one end of the support plate 42 is folded. The support plate 42 is now placed on a base body 53 of a device 41 which device 41 is provided with at least one slide 54, 56, which slide or slides 54, 56 will be described in what follows. At least one of the slides 54, 56 is movable with[in] respect to the base body 53 and/or with respect to the other slide 56, 54.

The geometry of this base body 53 is matched to the geometry of the support plate 42. Both slides 54, 56 of the device 41 are initially open. The[Now the] support plate 42 is now adjusted to the required cylinder circumference or to the required folding measure by the use[means] of an adjustment mechanism 57.

Both slides 54, 56 are closed. The[Thereafter, the] filler material 51, 52 is

subsequently poured or is pressed into the gap[in] in a positively connected manner. Depending on the shape of the slides 54, 56, a flat sub-structure, such as[i.e.] one which is flush with the support plate 42, or a raised sub-structure is attained. The[achieved, wherein the] slides 54, 56 act as molds 54, 56 for the filler material 51, 52. In this case, at least one of the filler materials 51, 52 protrudes in the radial direction past a[the] virtual extension V42 of the exterior of the support plate 42. Now the filler material 51, 52 is pulled or is ground to be flush by the use[means] of a further device 58. Subsequently the printing blanket 43 is applied to the support plate 42 and to the filler material 51, 52. This can be performed with the aid of a stop 59, which can be placed against an end of the printing blanket 43, as seen in Fig. 8[it]. At the end of the production process, the slides 54, 56 are opened and the printing blanket unit is vulcanized. This vulcanization can be performed inside the device 41, and can[but] also be accomplished outside of the device 41.

[045] Figs. 9 and 10 show a particularly preferred production method for making a further printing blanket unit. This embodiment makes it possible to close or to

reinforce a groove of a cylinder.

[046] In the method shown in Figs. 9 and 10,[Here,] the filler material 51, 52 extends in a virtual extension V43 of the exterior of the printing blanket 43 in the longitudinal direction, i.e. in the circumferential direction of the printing blanket 43. In this case, the filler material 51, 52 can protrude, in the longitudinal direction, past one end 61, 62, as well as past both ends 61, 62 of the printing blanket 43. In the radial direction, the filler material 51, 52 can protrude at least partially past the virtual extension V43 of the exterior of the printing blanket 43, as may be seen in [(Figs. 10 and 11)].

[047] This embodiment is accomplished[achieved] by [means of]the following production method. As previously[already] described, at least one end of the support plate 42 is folded. The[Thereafter, the] printing blanket 43 is then applied to the support plate 42. In this case, it is unimportant whether or not the printing blanket 43 has[had] already been vulcanized. Subsequently, the slides 54, 56 are closed. Now, the filler material 51, 52, for use in closing and reinforcing a groove, is pressed or is poured in. Depending on how the slide 54, 56 is

configured[designed], a corresponding shape of the filler material 51, 52 is attained[achieved]. Thereafter, the filler material 51, 52 is shaped to the exact size. Depending on the needs, the vulcanization process can subsequently take place either[subsequently] inside of or outside of the device 41.

[048] The two above-described[last mentioned] production methods thus differ in that, in the embodiments in accordance with Figs. 6 to 8, the filler material 51, 52 is arranged between the support plate 42 and the printing blanket 43, wherein the filler material 51, 52 is first arranged on the support plate 42 and then the printing blanket 43 is put in place. In[, while in] the embodiment[s] in accordance with Figs. 9 to 11, the support plate 42 is connected with the printing blanket 43, and the filler material 51, 52 is then introduced. An[, wherein an] exterior surface of the filler material 51, 52, which is arranged on the exterior in the radial direction, is not covered by the printing blanket 43.

[049] As represented in Figs. 8, 11 and 12, the printing blanket unit 41 has at least one end of a greater thickness than an[the] area which is located between the two ends, so that the outer surface of the printing blanket unit, in the area of

this end₁ protrudes at least partially past the virtual extension V43 of the exterior of the printing blanket 43. In[and in] particular, this outer surface is embodied in a wedge shape. For thickening the end, the filler material 51, 52 is arranged at the ends of the printing blanket 43. In Figs. 8 and 12, an undercoating of the printing blanket at 43 can be seen, while in Fig. 11, a filling of the printing blanket 43 is represented.

[050] The embodiment with thickened ends in Fig. 8, in the state where it is mounted on the cylinder, correspondingly also applies to Fig. 11.

[051] In the state where the printing blanket unit is[they are] mounted on the printing blanket cylinder, this thickened end₁ or both thickened ends extend in a[the] radial direction past a virtual extension of the adjoining rubber blanket. An[, i.e. the] effective radius of the mounted rubber blanket is thus greater in the area of the ends. The area located inbetween is very much larger, and in particular is [(at least ten times greater,)] than the area of the ends. The thickening preferably extends in the circumferential direction by less than 10 mm, and in particular it extends less than 5 mm.

[052] Accordingly, in the state where the printing blanket unit is mounted on the printing blanket cylinder, a radius R11[,] or R12, as seen in [(Fig. 12())], of the cylinder₁ in relation to the exterior of the printing blanket 03, or in relation to the outside of the filler material 13, 14₁ is greater, at least in the area of an end of the printing blanket unit, than a radius R03 of the cylinder₁ in relation to the exterior of the printing blanket₁ in the area between the two ends.

[053] The printing blanket unit in accordance with the present invention has an[the] increased radius R11, R12₁ in the circumferential direction₁ of less than 10 mm, and in particular of less than 5 mm.

[054] In accordance with all of the disclosed[It applies to all] methods₁[that] the filler material 13, 14, 29, 51, 52 is introduced in a flowable, deformable state at least to one end of the two ends of the printing blanket unit. The filler material 13, 14, 29, 51, 52 is arranged₁ in the longitudinal direction₁ at least partially on a fold 08, 09, 27, 28, 48, 49 of the folded leg 04, 06, 21, 22, 44, 46 of the support plate 03, 18, 42 and protrudes₁ in the circumferential direction₁ past the fold 08, 09, 27, 28, 48, 49. After its application, the outside of the filler material 13, 14, 29, 51, 52

can be shaped to an appropriate[the] exact size. Preferably, the filler material 13, 14, 29, 51, 52 can be embodied as one piece. The materials of the printing blanket 03, 04 and of the filler material 13, 14, 29, 51, 52 can be identical or they can[designed to] be different.

[055] As represented in Fig. 10, in a particularly preferred embodiment of the present invention, the length L51, L52 of the filler material 51, 52 is more than 0.1 mm, and in particular is more than 0.4 mm. However[, however], this length is less than 2 mm, and in particular is less than 5 mm.

[056] For producing printing blanket units, with printing blanket units which initially lie stretched out, either preferably flat or slightly arched, the filler material 51, 52, or the support elements 13, 14 or are is introduced at ends of the printing blanket unit facing away from each other, [(except for the preferred[exemplary] embodiment of Fig. 5)].

[057] A device 41 consisting of several parts, can be employed to produce[for producing] the printing blanket unit, wherein at least two elements of the device 41, such as, for example, the slides 54, 56, are movable in relation to each other.

In connection with this, it is possible, for example for use in producing thickened ends of the printing blanket unit, that at least the surface of the printing blanket, which is resting against the filler material 51, 52 protrudes, in the direction of the exterior of the printing blanket unit, at least partially past the virtual extension V43 of the exterior of the printing blanket 43, or that at least the surface of the printing blanket resting against the filler material 51, 52 protrudes in the direction of the exterior of the printing blanket unit at least partially past the virtual extension V42 of the exterior of the support plate 42 with the printing blanket 43 not yet applied to the support plate 42. The spacing between the two elements, for example between the two slides 54, 56, should be adjustable in the longitudinal direction of the printing blanket unit. At least one surface of one of the two elements, such as the slides 54, 56, rests against the filler material 51, 52, and at least one surface can rest against a folded leg 44, 46 of the support plate 42. At least the surface resting against the filler material 51, 52 can protrude, in the direction of the exterior of the printing blanket unit, at least partially past the virtual extension V43 of the exterior of the printing blanket 43. Alternatively, [, or] at least the surface of

the printing blanket resting against the filler material 51, 52 can protrude in the direction of the exterior of the printing blanket unit at least partially past the virtual extension V42 of the exterior of the support plate 42 with the printing blanket 43 not yet applied to the support plate 42. At least one other device 58, such as, for example, a tool 58 for processing at least the outside of the filler material 51, 52, can be arranged on the device 41.

[058] At least one support 53, such as, for example, the base body 53, should be arranged in the device 41 for use in receiving the support plate 42. The[, wherein the] inside of the support plate 42 rests on this support 53.

[059] The support 53 can consist of several elements. At least one element of the support 53 cooperates with a leading leg 46 of the support plate 42. Another[, another] element of the support 53 works with the trailing leg 44 of the support plate 42.

[060] Preferably one element of the support 53 can change its position with[in] respect to the other element of the support 53.

[061] The device 41 can also have elements for folding the ends of the support

plate 42. It[, i.e. it] can thus be embodied as a folding machine.

[062] Embodiments wherein the support plate has only one folded leg are not specifically represented. In these cases, the filler material can be arranged on the fold of the one folded leg and on the other, non-folded end of the support plate.

[063] The second end of the printing blanket unit is then not arranged in any groove. Instead it is positioned[, instead] only on the exterior of the barrel of the printing blanket cylinder.

[064] It applies to all of the above-described printing blanket units and methods, that the support or filler material 13, 14, 34, 36, 51, 52 is arranged, or can be arranged on the printing blanket unit, prior to the mounting of the printing blanket unit on the printing blanket cylinder.

[065] The support or filler material 13, 14, 34, 36, 51, 52, [also identified as support elements 13, 14, 34, 36, 51, 52,] can[, for example,] also be used, for example, for supporting a counter-cylinder in the radial direction, because the printing blanket cylinder is in contact with a counter-cylinder, such as, for example, a forme cylinder or a plate cylinder. The forme cylinder has at least one groove, in

[WO 2004/054807]

[PCT/DE2003/003941]

which [the]at least one associated printing plate is fastened. In this case, the filler material 13, 14, 34, 36, 51, 52 works together with a printing plate of the counter-cylinder in that they mutually support each other.

[066] While preferred embodiments of a printing blanket assembly for a blanket cylinder and methods for producing a printing blanket assembly, in accordance with the present invention have been set forth fully and completely hereinabove, it will be apparent to one of skill in the art that various change in, for example, the structure of the printing press in which the blanket cylinder is used, the drive for the blanket cylinder, and the like could be made without departing from the true spirit and scope of the present invention which is accordingly to be limited only by the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

[List of Reference Symbols

01	-
02	Support plate
03	Printing blanket, rubber blanket
04	Leg (support plate)
05	Printing blanket cylinder
06	Leg (support plate)
07	Center element
08	Fold
09	Fold
10	-
11	End (printing blanket)
12	End (printing blanket)
13	Filler material, support element
14	Filler material, support element
15	-
16	Gap
17	-
18	Support plate
19	Printing blanket
20	-
21	Leg
22	Leg
23	Sealing element
24	Sub-structure layer
25	-
26	Gap
27	Fold
28	Fold]

- [29 Filler material, sealing material
- 30 -
- 31 End (printing blanket)
- 32 End (printing blanket)
- 33 Cutting line
- 34 Support element, filler material
- 35 Center element
- 36 Support element, filler material
- 37 -
- 38 -
- 39 -
- 40 -
- 41 Device, production device
- 42 Support plate
- 43 Printing blanket
- 44 Leg
- 45 -
- 46 Leg
- 47 Center element
- 48 Fold
- 49 Fold
- 50 -
- 51 Filler material
- 52 Filler material
- 53 Base body, support
- 54 Mold, slide
- 55 -
- 56 Mold, slide
- 57 Adjustment mechanism
- 58 Device, further, tool
- 59 Stop
- 60 -]

[WO 2004/054807]

[PCT/DE2003/003941]

[61 End, printing blanket

62 End, printing blanket

aO1 Distance

a02 Distance

d01 Thickness (printing blanket unit)

d02 Thickness (support plate)

L13 Length

L14 Length

L51 Length

L52 Length

V42 Extension, virtual

V43 Extension, virtual

R Radius

R03 Radius

R11 Radius

R12 Radius

α 04 Opening angle

α 06 Opening angle]